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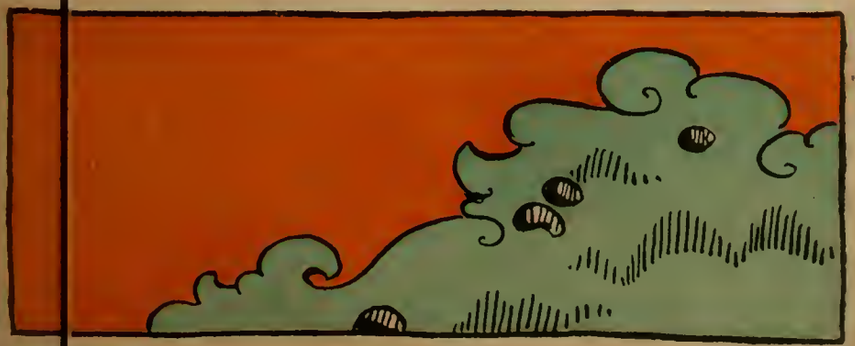

Behind The Garden Wall

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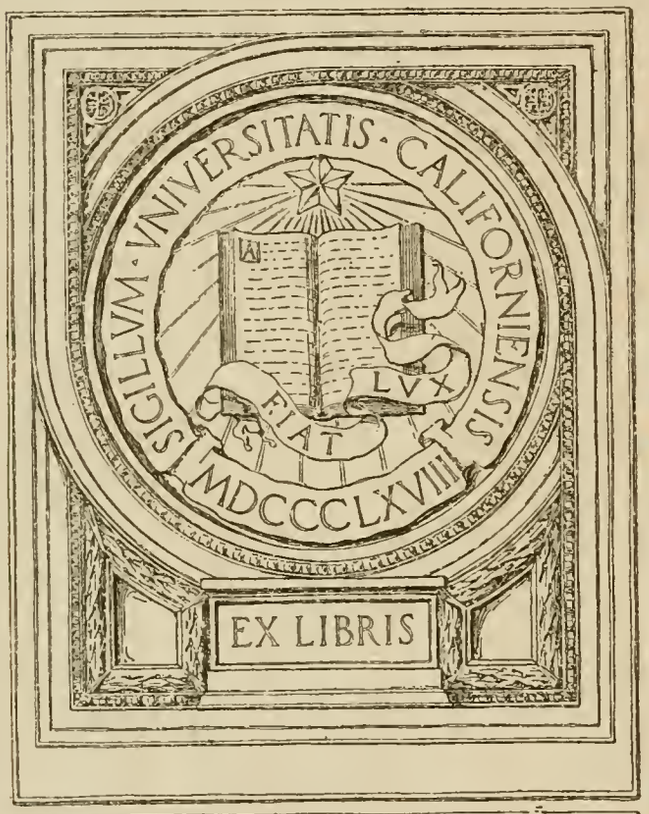

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"They balanced in the center
And with exquisite grace,
Would lightly whirl each partner
In the fondest of embrace."

Behind the Garden Wall

By Robert Wallace

Illustrated by
Elsinore Robinson Crowell

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TO JANET, DUDLEY AND DORCAS

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The Reason Why

The Reason Why

The moon hung like an orange round,
And shed her mellow light
Down on the Garden bathed in dew,
And on the pebbles white;
The music of the Katy-dids
Was really quite sublime,
They played so softly several airs,
And kept such perfect time.

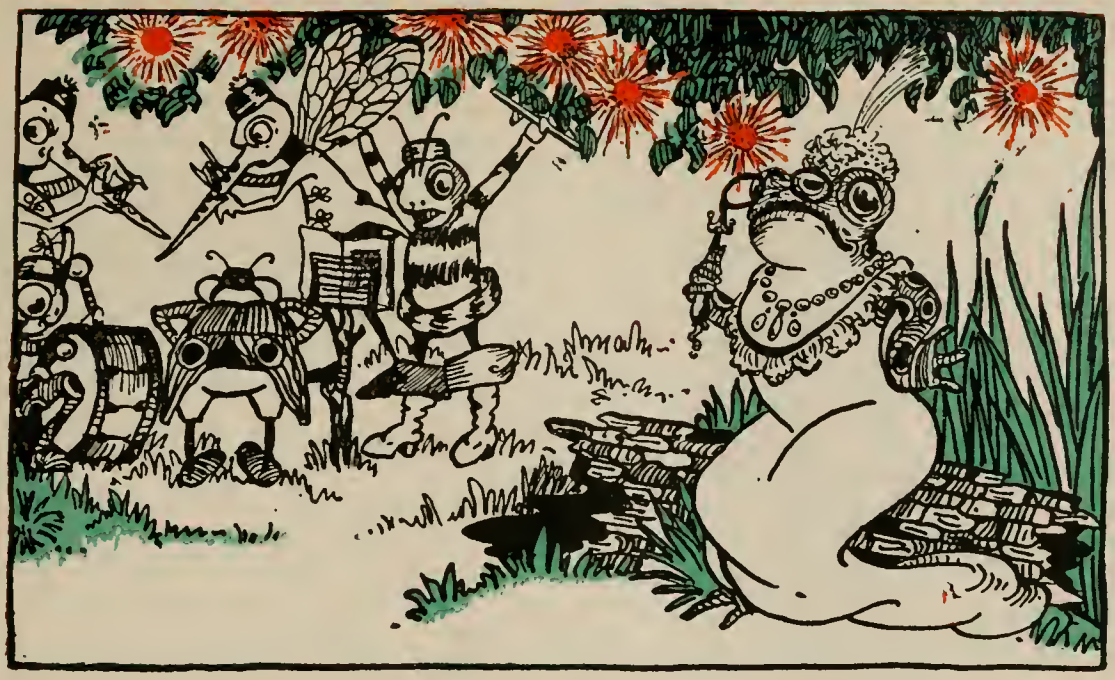
Most half asleep, I heaved a sigh
To think how very few
Unusual happenings occur,
Considered strange or new;
The scenery is always full
Of grass and trees, or corn;
The night steals on us still and dark,
Then comes the same old morn.

What makes the busy little brook
Forever leap the hill?
Why can't it back up skittishly,
Or lie down and keep still?
Why do great mountains rear up high,
And valleys peaceful sleep?
When one talks to a new-hatched chick,
Why will she only peep?

So musing on the ways of life
I thought how quite superb
'Twould be to know the babblings
Of each Blossom, Bug and Bird;
And what a treat to listen sharp
To all the creatures small
Who have such gay and frisky times
Behind our old gray wall.

When lo! a funny little man
Sprang upward thro' the grass,
And with him, carried by wee elves,
A key as clear as glass—
"Take this," they chanted, all at once,
"Your wishes have come true,
Forevermore all garden lore
Will open wide to you."

Behind the Garden Wall



The Mosquito Ball

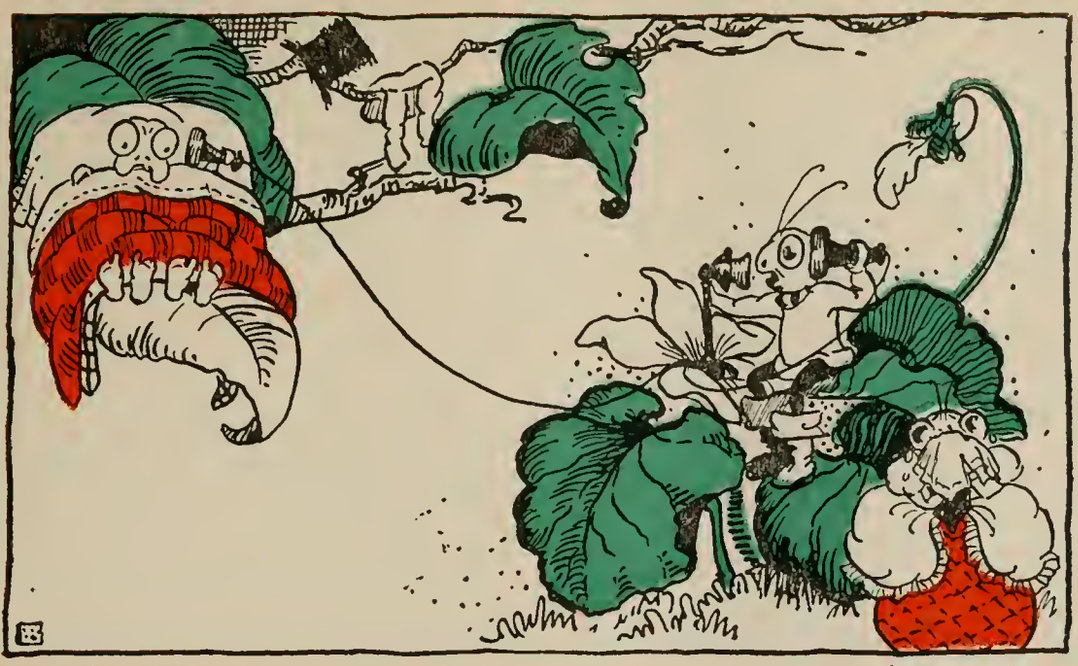
You should have been with me and seen
The swell Mosquito ball,
The most exclusive set were there,
And, with becoming drawl,
They lisped sweet nothings in my ear,
And tickled just like fuzz;
It made me laugh most fit to kill
To hear the June bugs buzz.

Old Daddy Longs Legs donned blue specs,
His beauty to enhance,
And whirled around on both hind legs
In nearly every dance.
Miss Angelina Katydid
Looked ravishing in red,
While little Phœbe Rose Bug
Wore an aigrette on her head.

But, quite the grandest sight that night,
Was a dowager in blue,
With frosty glance through her lorgnette
She would each one subdue,
And sat in state, puffed up with pride–
I thought she would explode;
It surely must be something grand
To be a rich Tree Toad.

A lot of bugs were twittering round
Gay Reginald Horse Fly;
I didn't like his looks real well,
He seemed so smooth and sly;
But Pete Potato Bug was fine
With yellow suit striped black;
His wind gave out when half way through,
So he left in a hack.

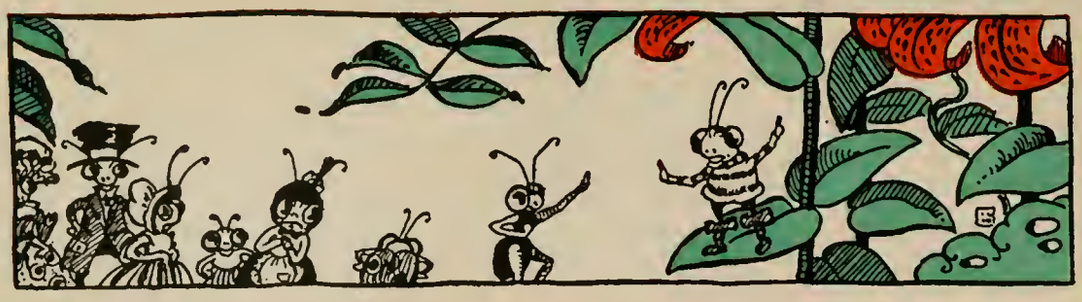
I'm glad I did not miss the treat
To hear the music shrill,
And watch those large Mosquitoes gay
Frisk around in their quadrille;
They balanced in the center,
And, with exquisite grace,
Would lightly whirl each partner
In the fondest of embrace.



Our Hero

A brutal Tiger Lily
Had a tooth-ache and a scowl,
And jumbled all his temper up
With savage shriek and howl.
He started yowling to himself
Before the break of day,
And nothing seemed to cheer him up,
Or drive the pain away.

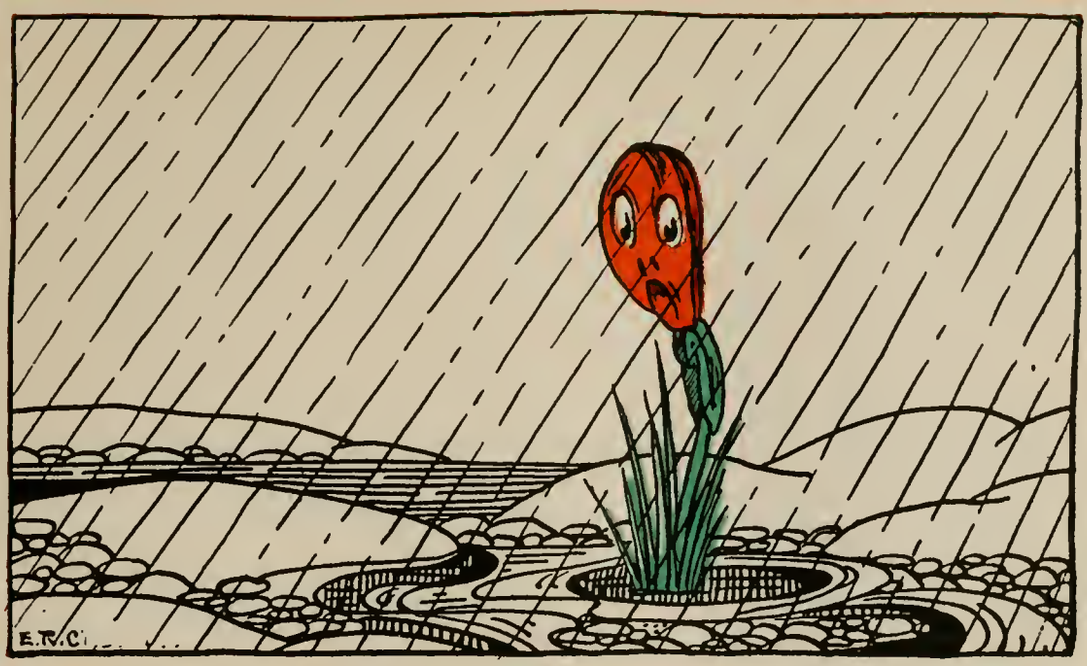
They called old Doctor Long Legs
On the cob-web telephone;
But, having heard the yells, he said,
"Just leave that brute alone!"
What could be done to stop the noise
And help the creature's plight?
Ben Beetle called for volunteers
To ease the ladies' fright.



"Who will go up, without constraint,
And stop that doleful rant?"
"I will," piped up the tiny voice
Of young Alonzo Ant,
And, straightway skinning off his coat,
And wasting no more talk,
He tightened fast his leather belt,
And shinned right up that stalk.

Wild fears clutched at his little heart,
And he was feeling chilly,
But, with a bold and solemn face,
He thus addressed the lily–
"The racket you see fit to make,
I've come here to discuss,
We've stood this nonsense far too long,
Keep still and hush your fuss!"

At this, the mad and roaring flower,
Like almost every bully,
Abruptly ceased his dismal yells,
No longer wild and woolly;
And thus the savage plant was tamed,
Who made such noise and clatter,
And once again exemplified
The power of mind o'er matter.



The Croak of the Crocus

The drizzling rain is falling fast
And melting all the snow.
Our garden looks like some small lake
Filled from the overflow—
The silence of a new-born Spring
Is broken by a wheeze,
As, turning quickly in the path,
I hear a Crocus sneeze!

"Kerchew! Kerchew—!! What shall I do?
It makes my petals blush
To stand all bare, in this cold air,
Most ankle deep in slush;
As pioneer of all the flowers,
While snug the others sleep,
I stand here snuffling with a cold,
And hoarsely croak and weep.

"When Gardner Brown tucked me in bed,
Real early in the Fall,
I snuggled down so warm and nice,
Beside the old gray wall;
But now, with goose flesh on my legs,
Quite shattered is my dream,
I wish he'd shuffle round this way,
And turn on lots of steam.

"It's all the blundering error
Of my foolish little clock,
Who promised to come round in time
And on my bulb to knock;
All Winter long he's run in turn,
First slow, then fast, by streaks;
That's why I'm shivering in the mud,
Ahead of time two weeks.

"Before my head is sneezed quite off,
Or, we bid fond adieux,
Pray hie at once to yonder house
For cap and overshoes,
Also a cup of ginger tea;
For I have oft been told,
When one is troubled with the creeps,
It's splendid for a cold."

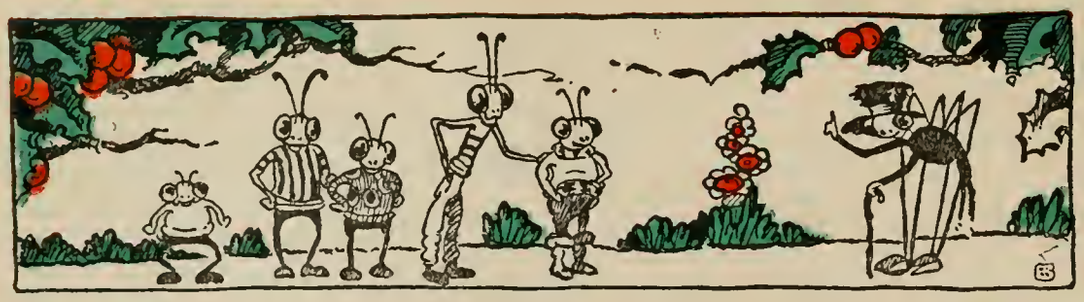
Coals of Fire

"At that, Ben Beetle and the boys
Let go a rousing cheer,
And swarmed around that wrecked abode
With all their working gear."

Coals of Fire

The sportive wind, with fitful gust,
Had romped around and blown
Cordelia Spider's cobweb house,
And left it overthrown:
"What shall I do?" the spinster cried,
And wildly tore her hair,
"I'll catch my death of dampness, sure,
Exposed to this raw air."

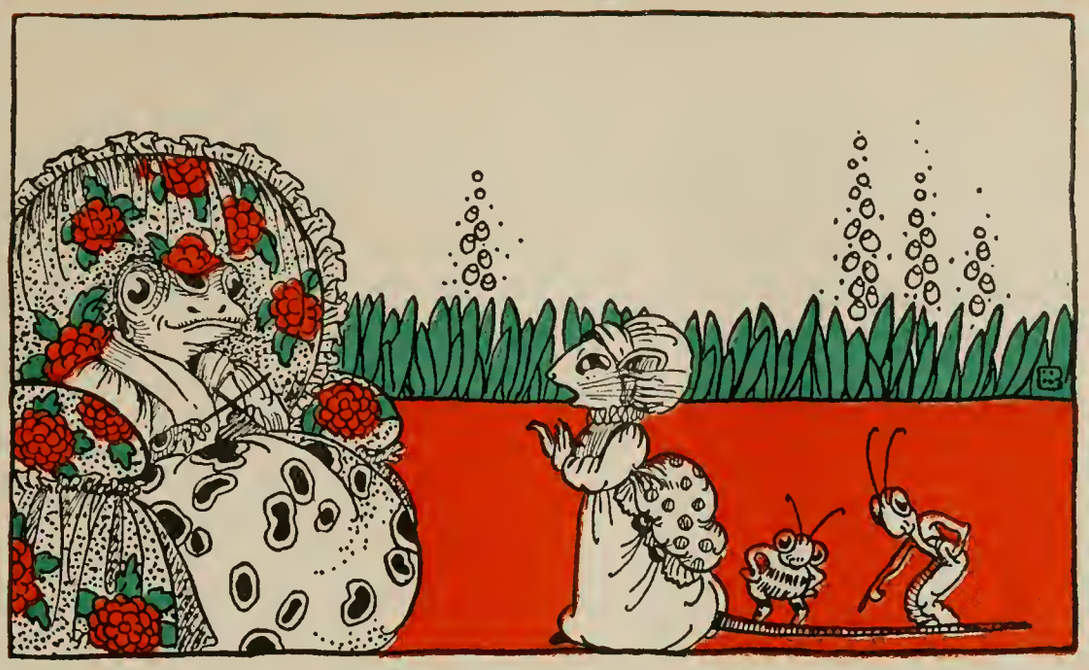
'Twas then old Daddy Long Legs
Observed the maiden's plight,
And swiftly ran with all his feet
His speed to expedite;
And, calling loudly to the boys
Who in the garden dwell,
Began, in sad and quavering voice,
The baleful news to tell.



"The virtues of this lady fair
We should not magnify—
She treated in a shameful way
Poor Reginald Horse Fly—
But still," quoth Daddy Long Legs
As he heaved a gentle sigh,
"We can't, as self-respecting bugs,
Permit her thus to cry."

At that, Ben Beetle and the boys
Let go a rousing cheer,
And swarmed around the wrecked abode
With all their working gear,
And tugged and hauled, with Ben as boss,
And fixed the house up fine—
'Twas fun to hear him bellow out:
"Pull taut that slack guy line!"

And so, her home once more restored,
She thanked them with a smile,
And then retired to take a nap
And rest herself a-while;
And, as she pulled the blankets back
And folded up the spread,
She thought about those coals of fire
Heaped gently on her head.



Grandma Frog

No doubt Old Doctor Long Legs
Is a very learned leech,
But, somehow, he confuses us
With all his Latin speech,
So out here in the garden
When our systems we befog,
Instead of taking his black pills,
We call on Grandma Frog.

She dwells beneath a toadstool
In a manner quite superb,
And, hanging from the rafters,
Is most every kind of herb;
Likewise long strings of onions dry,
All dangling by their necks,
Make faces up and slyly grin
While she hunts for her specs.

"Hold out your tongue," she loudly bawls,
And wisely shakes her head,
"It's white as any Turkish towel,
You'd best be tucked in bed;
There's lots of fever round this Spring,
Your skin feels like a stove;
I'll brew a potent sleeping draught
Of peppermint and clove.

"Bathe all your feet in water hot,
And soak your hind legs too,
This thimble full be sure to take
Of sparkling honey dew;
Should sneezing fits disturb your sleep,
Or dryness of the throat,
Repeat the dose in half an hour,
Sweet slumber to promote."

Such simple remedies as these
The worthy dame prescribes,
And gives to each, quite free of charge,
Much sage advice besides;
We one and all, both great and small,
From Bug to Pollywog,
Extol the skill and wisdom rare
Of dear old Grandma Frog.

A Tailless Tale

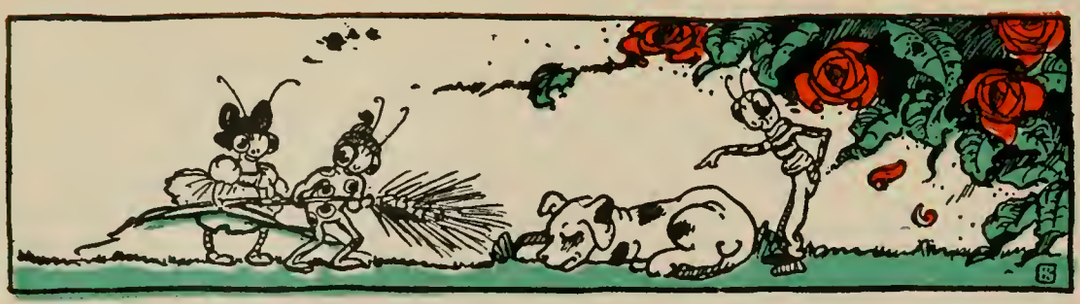
Bill Bull-Frog, the baritone singer,
Has a voice of unqualified power;
He sits on a stump in the rushes
And warbles away by the hour;
I overheard one of his ditties,
And think you will each one agree
That the sentiments are most exquisite,
Though croaked in a sad minor key:

"There once was a pink Arethusa,
Who used to live down by the pond,
And, also a foolish young Tad-pole,
Of whom she became very fond;
She loved him just like a young brother,
And often would give him advice
Pertaining to proper deportment,
In terms that were crisp and concise.

Spring-time Spats

Mosquitoes have the tenderest note—
There's something in their song
That moves us all unconsciously
To search both hard and long;
One chanted softly in my ear,
As I was waking up,
Of how our Pussy Willows small
Scared Gard'ner Brown's young pup.

They saw him ambling down the walk,
And started to emit
The most blood-curdling caterwauls,
And yowl and hiss and spit;
At once his feverish little tail
Stopped wagging 'round about,
He stood with one paw in the air,
A prey to fear and doubt.



And, looking 'round for all the noise,
He paused a while to scan
Those Pussies sitting in a row,
Then round the bush he ran,
And lifting up his puppy voice,
In high falsetto key,
He started in to bark and yelp
As loudly as could be.

This racket brought out Grandma Frog,
Who sized the matter up,
And, with a stern look in her eye,
She thus addressed the pup—
"Come, pray perk up, and wipe your chin,
And take a grip on life;
It is not nice to ram around
And be in constant strife.

"Come here, young man, and make less noise,
And in the corner stand,
While I dispense cold logic,
And your reasoning reprimand.
It does no good to bark and bite,
Or your new jacket rend,
Just stand right still and think no ill,
And joyous thought waves send."

The Squash Bug's Lament

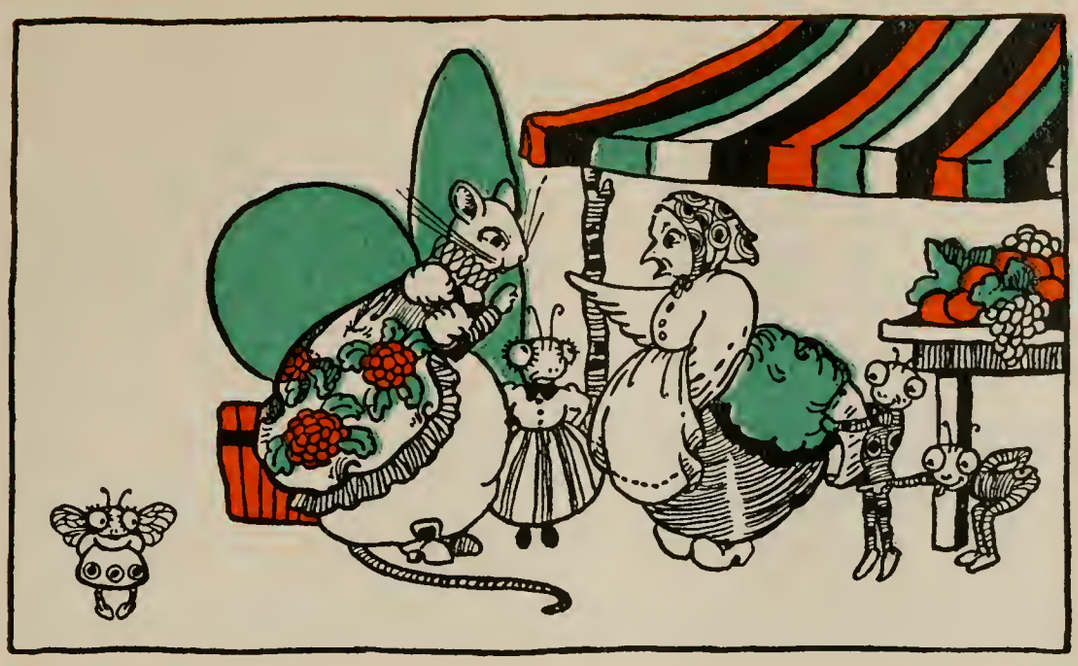
The frost is on the pumpkin,
And I don't feel very spry,
But just sit 'round, with mittens on,
And wish it were July.
If but some kind fairy
Would this cold spell transform,
Back to the good old Summer-time
When it was nice and warm.

Those days of sun and gladness,
And those velvet nights of heat,
When I would light my corn-cob pipe
And find an easy seat,
And watch the fire-flies' twinkling dance
And hear the Katydids,
Or listen to the squawking
Of those sassy Bull-Frog kids.

Then later, when the moon came up
And shed her silvery light,
'Twas fun to watch Bob-Rose Bug
With his breeches cut so tight,
And see him thread his lonely way
Straight down the garden walk,
In evening clothes, with stately pose,
And shirt as white as chalk.

From early morn till late at night,
It was one round of fun,
As, in and out between the vines,
We'd frisk about and run;
We kept Old Brown, the gardener,
In one continual fuss;
No matter how he hunted 'round
He never could catch us.

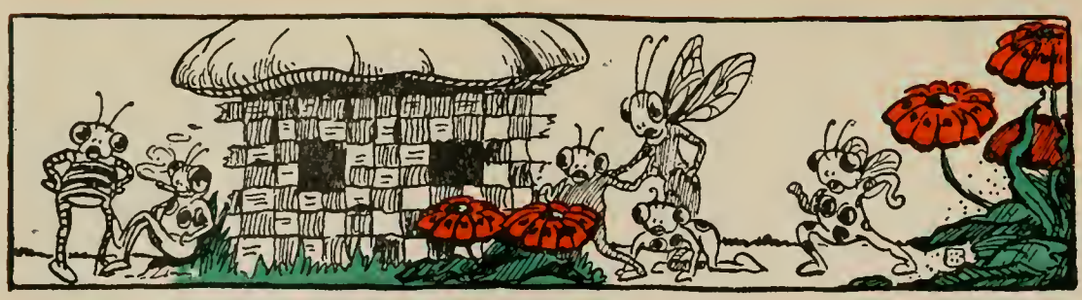
That's why I want a fairy,
And I want her mighty quick,
To move up the equator,
For I'm feeling cold and sick,
As here I sit all frizzled up,
A prey to frost and blues,
With cap pulled down my ears to shield,
And feet in overshoes.



It Can't Be True

Miss Susan Sparrow loves to talk
And make no end of chatter,
She's driven off the other birds,
With all her noisy clatter;
And now she's tattling round the town,
With unbecoming noise,
About old Sidney Night-hawk
And those pious Titmouse boys.

To say the saintly Titmouse twins,
Who are their Mother's pets,
Would ever sneak behind the barn
And smoke up cigarettes—
Is far too big a story
For my feeble mind to grip,
And well I know it is not so
Or they would have the pip.



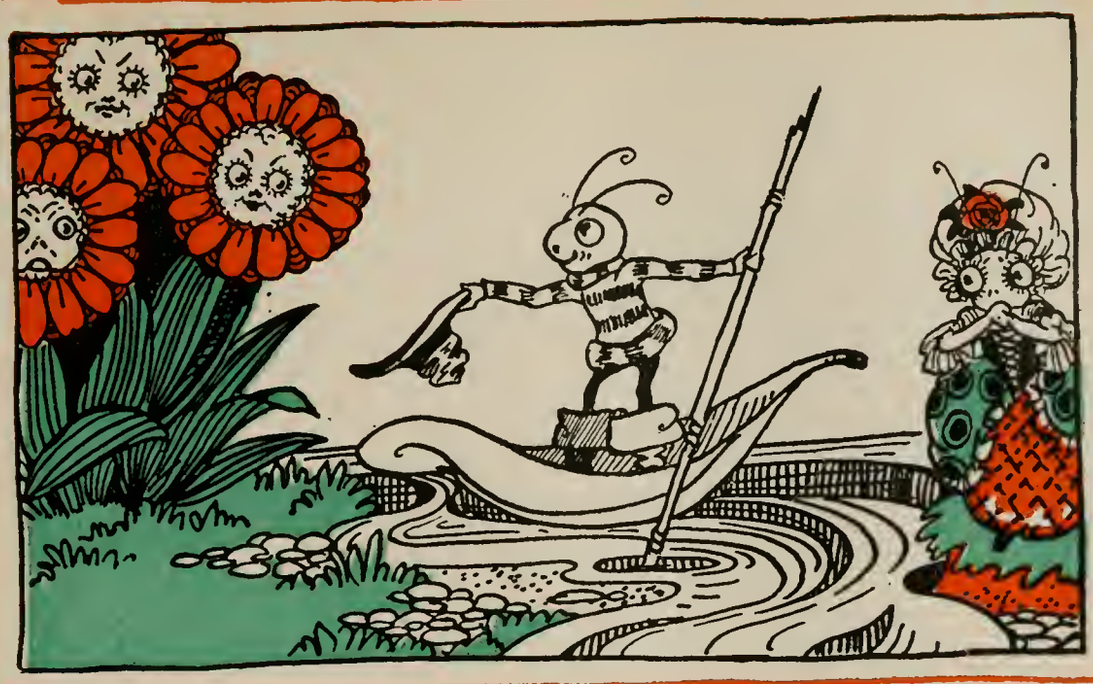
Why, they are models of the place,
And dote on one another,
It's such a gratifying sight
The way they mind their Mother;
Now if it was that Bullfinch child,
Who does his toys destroy,
I might believe Miss Sparrow's tale,
For he's a naughty boy.

And as for poor old Sidney,
With his wild and hawky ways,
He's simply twisted 'round a bit,
And thinks the nights are days;
For, ever since his childhood
When he suffered from a chill,
Each time he bursts out into song,
His voice sounds harsh and shrill.

So I advise you, Susan dear,
To use a little care,
If Mrs. Titmouse hears such talk,
Look—out—for—your—back—hair!
Why can't you bite your tongue real hard,
And let your neighbors rest,
And take a cheerful view of life
As you sit on the nest?

Ben Beetle

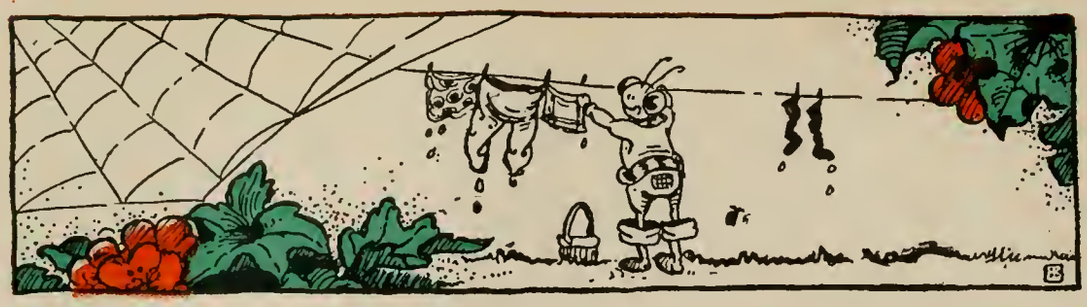
"His bedroom faces to the south
And has a pleasant view,
A high post bed with snowy spread
And curtains of old blue."



Ben Beetle

Ben Beetle does not mind the rain,
For, when the east winds blow,
And Spring-time floods make little pools
Our yard to overflow—
He lights a fire in his small cave,
And sits all snug and warm,
And loudly laughs whene'er he hears
The whistling of the storm.

Sometimes he'll dance a sprightly jig
Or lively bug-song roar,
For Ben has such a charming way
Of capering 'round the floor;
Or else he'll put the kettle on
And drink six cups of tea,
And play upon an old Jew's harp
Or eat prodigiously.



He also washes all his clothes,
And, when they're clean and wrung,
They're fastened up with brier thorns,
And on a cob-web hung;
It thrills one's blood to see him stand
Quite nimbly on his head,
And, while in this inverted state,
Both socks and jacket shed.

He has been known to stir himself
And rise before the dawn,
His working pantaloons to mend
Where they were ripped and torn;
Once, all the cloth that he could find
Was flannel colored red,
And this he stitched into the hole
With good stout linen thread.

His bedroom faces to the south,
And has a pleasant view,
A high post-bed with snowy spread
And curtains of old blue;
He tucks the blankets round his neck
And underneath his chin,
And snores quite softly in his sleep
With most complacent grin.

The Picnic

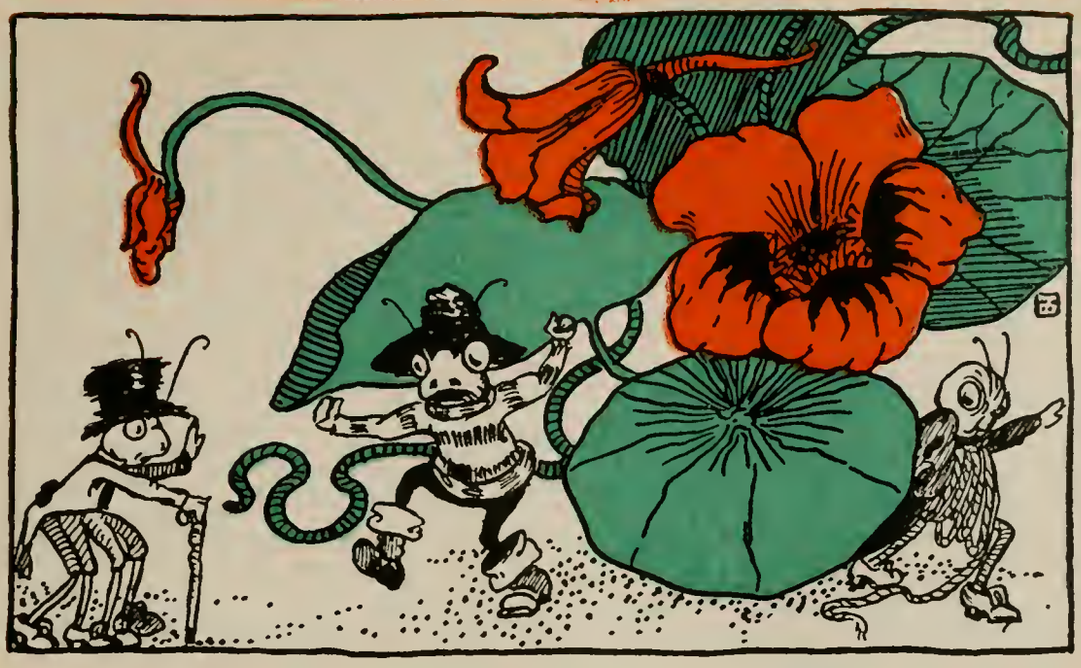
The great event of all the year
Came off the other day,
And all the little garden folk
Had one long feast of play.
The annual basket picnic
Of the Lady Beetle's Club,
Was held with ardent gusto
In a large hydrangea tub.

Miss Angelina Katydid
Took charge of the cuisine,
And wore a charming one-piece gown
Of modest apple green;
While little Tessie Tumble-bug
In sailor hat and shirt,
Brought sandwiches of lettuce crisp
And rose leaves for dessert.

The members of the Choral Club
Played off a game of ball,
With field sports in the afternoon
Which were the best of all;
I loved to see Chick Cricket jump,
And with such sprightly grace
Go humping 'round that mossy tub
And win the hurdle race.

Ben Beetle in the tug-of-war
Won luster and renown,
He tugged with such tenacity,
The other team fell down;
And yelling orders to his mates
Their courage to sustain,
Pugnaciously he gripped that rope
And heaved with might and main.

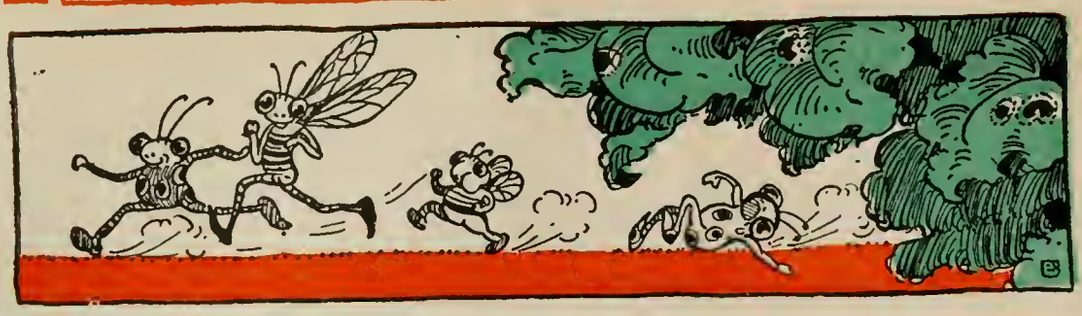
No wonder with such sport as this,
The time just simply flew,
And twilight stole around that tub
Before the games were through;
So scrambling o'er the mossy rim
With manner most polite,
They scampered to their tiny homes
And chirped each one "Good night."



Stop Thief!

Ben Beetle is a splendid chap
And seldom brawls or fights,
But, when it comes to being robbed,
He stands up for his rights;
This morning he ran down the path,
With rage his face was red,
And, clutching wildly at the air,
He stopped me still and said:

"Sing a song of battle,
And pry me up a brick,
Before I am confused in speech,
And mix my rhetoric;
I journeyed o'er the garden wall,
Entirely for my health,
And now they take my property,
And sneak it off by stealth.



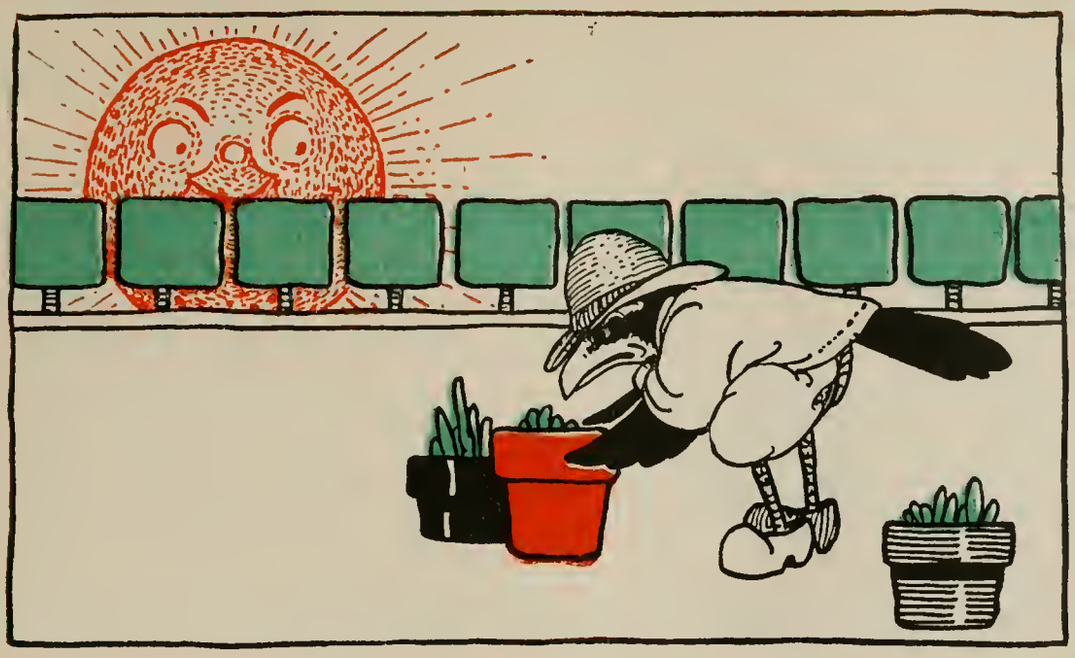
"For some one cut my clothes line off,
And lugged it clean away,
That's why I stand here on one foot,
And sing this roundelay;
You cannot blame me, gentle sir,
For sputtering thus with fury,
I'll have this rogue convicted yet,
Before a judge and jury.

"I hear Uriah Cinch Bug
Has a very strange disease,
And saunters off with odds and ends
Of everything he sees;
Now, maybe, that low-minded scamp
Might think the idea fine,
To manufacture gallowses
From my brand new clothes-line.

"If that's a fact, and can be proved,
I will myself regale
By pulling on my overalls,
And camping on his trail;
The neighborhood is all stirred up,
And will sigh with relief
When I, by shrewd detective work,
Trail down this foxy thief."

The Man With the Hoe

"Well, now she's hired Old Joseph Crow
To keep the flower beds neat,
And he's been grumbling at the job,
And used up by the heat."



The Man With the Hoe

I think Miss Katie Cochin
Is an out and out old fuss,
The way she bosses round the boys
Is really scandalous;
Why did she run about and squawk,
And chase and try to catch
Sid Rabbit and his brother Sam
In her back garden patch?

No doubt those naughty little boys
Went hopping all around,
And peered into the tool-house dark
To see what could be found,
And ate prodigiously of peas,
And curly lettuce green,
And also beets and radishes,
And made an awful scene.

Well, now she's hired old Joseph Crow
To keep her flower beds neat,
And he's been grumbling at the job,
And used up by the heat,
For everything the garden grows
He has to weed by hand,
And hoe and rake from morn till night,
And shovel muck and sand.

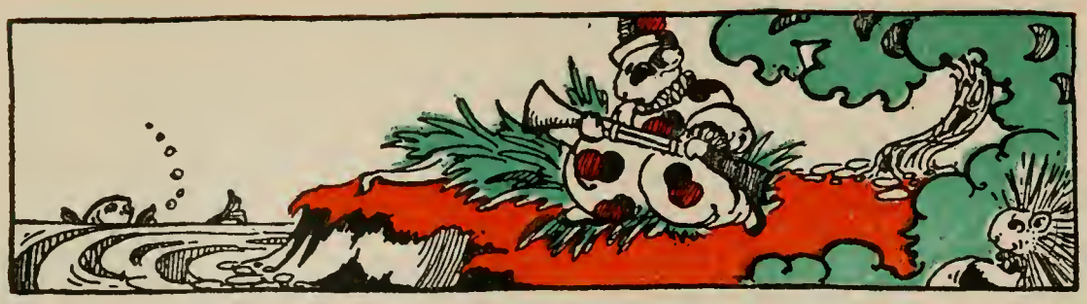
There, also is the servants' hall
To furnish day by day,
And they demand most everything
From Brussels sprouts to hay;
The butler asks for egg-plant,
The coachman dotes on beans,
The laundress lives on mushrooms raw,
While Joe devours sardines.

For so much time is spent by him
In serving one and all,
That, when the dinner bell goes clang,
He's far too tired to crawl;
So, sitting on the cool, green grass,
He opens up a can,
And with these dainty little fish
Consoles the inner man.

Help! Help!

While looking in the undergrowth,
I saw, to my surprise,
A small and spotted Guinea Pig,
With large pathetic eyes;
"Come, be a good Samaritan,"
The poor beast called to me,
"For I'm torn up like shredded wheat,
And pine for toast and tea.

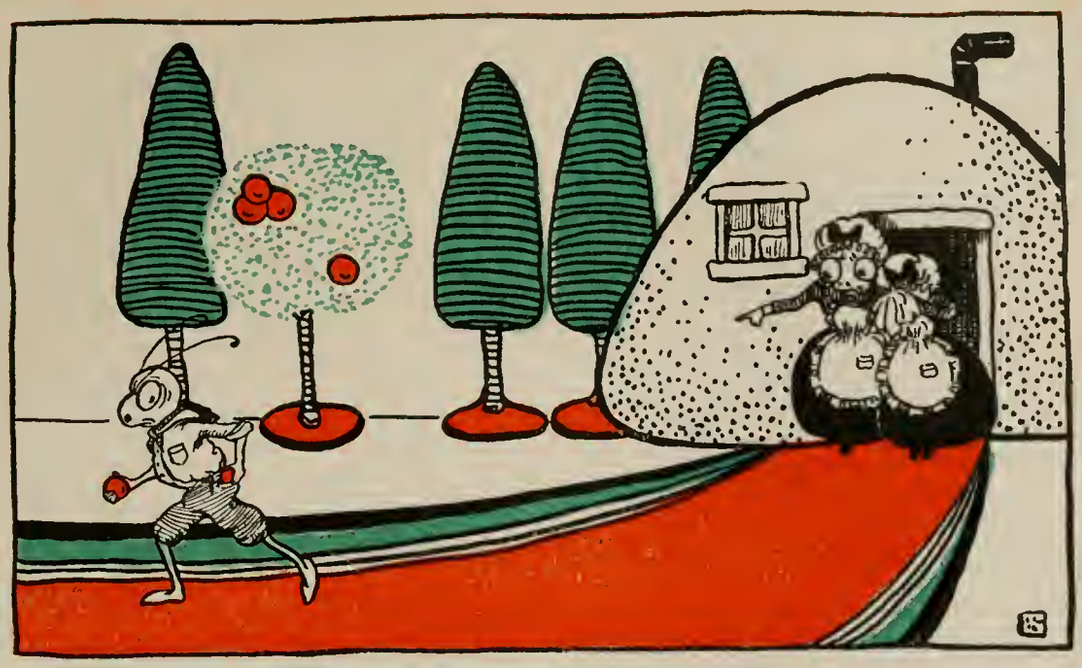
"This morn I went off fishing,
In the glaring sun and heat,
And toted, in a basket small,
The lunch I had to eat,
And, placing it beneath a tree
Upon the river bank,
I then threw out my hook and line,
And into slumber sank.



"I dreamed of catching monstrous whales,
And lobsters colored red,
And thought my line was nothing
But a piece of pink silk thread;
When suddenly, I heard a snort,
And, waking with a start,
I saw a sight that made me ill,
And wrung my poor old heart.

"For, there, upon a fallen log,
Proceeding then to dine,
Sat, gravely munching on my lunch,
A pie-faced Porcupine!
'What brand of nerve food do you take?'
I loudly bawled at him;
He was too full for utterance
And could but faintly grin.

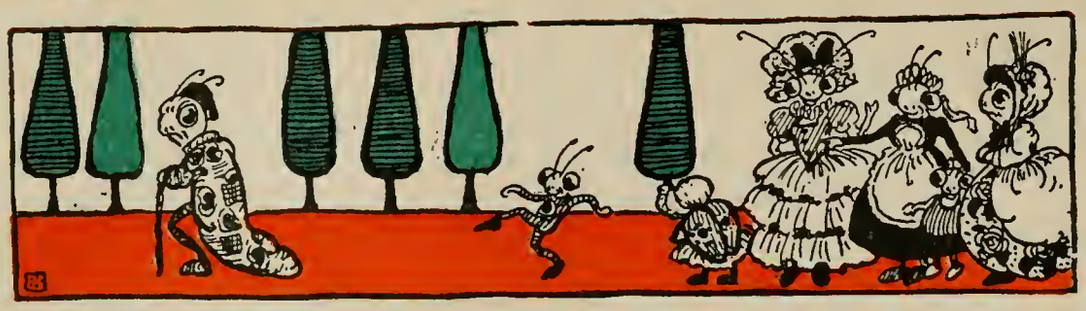
"So, in a towering rage I left,
And now I humbly pray
A short-time loan of sixteen cents—
This large sum to defray—
The cost of buying in great haste,
A first-class leather gun,
So I can scare that greedy beast,
And put him on the run."



A Vulgar Fellow

That old Uriah Cinch Bug
Is the meanest man in town,
He limps around the garden
In a ragged dressing gown,
And eats the stickum off from stamps,
And swears it is delicious,
Although I never liked the taste
And think it's not nutritious.

He will not play at hopscotch,
Or be friendly with the boys,
But, goes off grumbling by himself,
And kicks about the noise;
He chased Chick Cricket off the lawn
For singing sweet and low,
And, just because he lingered 'round,
He smashed his small banjo.



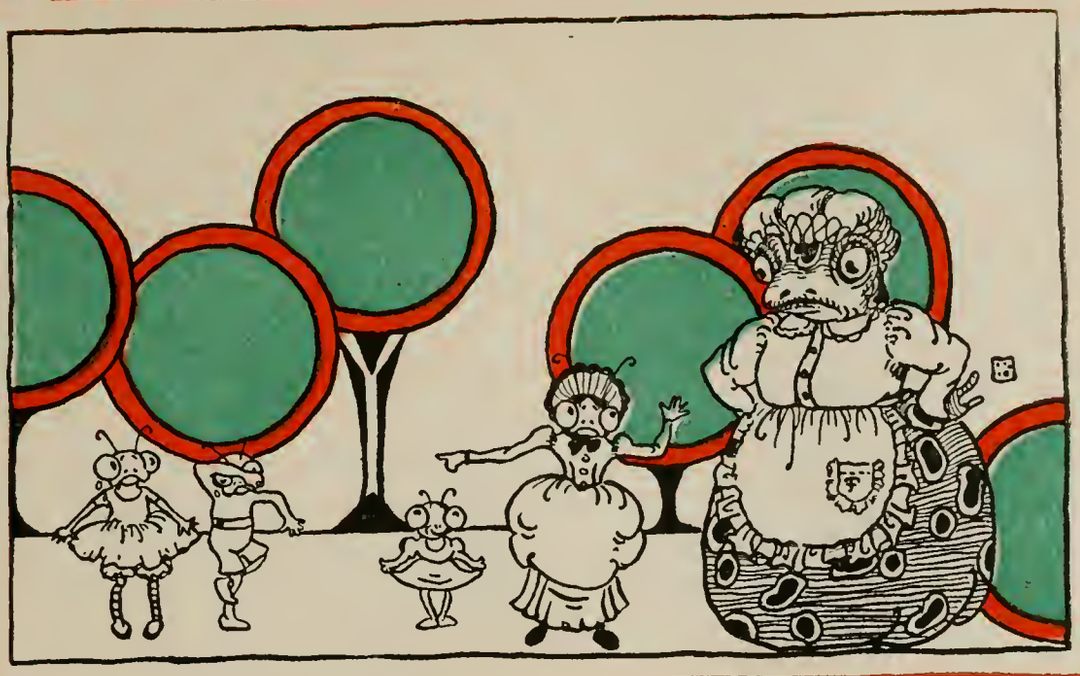
He never sings a lively song,
Or whistles through his thumbs,
But searches up and down the walk,
For cast-off clothes and crumbs;
One day he stole some tiny eggs
From two defenseless ants,
And, chuckling like a squeaky hinge,
He stowed them in his pants.

The villain and his stolen swag
Kept company none too long,
As, bustling down the narrow walk,
He mingled with the throng,
For, when he saw an opening small,
He made a sudden dash,
And, bumping into Mrs. Snail,
Went sprawling with a crash!

Spoiled were those eggs so round and rare,
And spoiled his breeches too,
His pockets filled with sticky yolks,
His eyes with tearful dew;
So let us leave him sitting there—
It serves him right—you know,
Although to his two penny soul
It is a bitter blow.

Hot Times

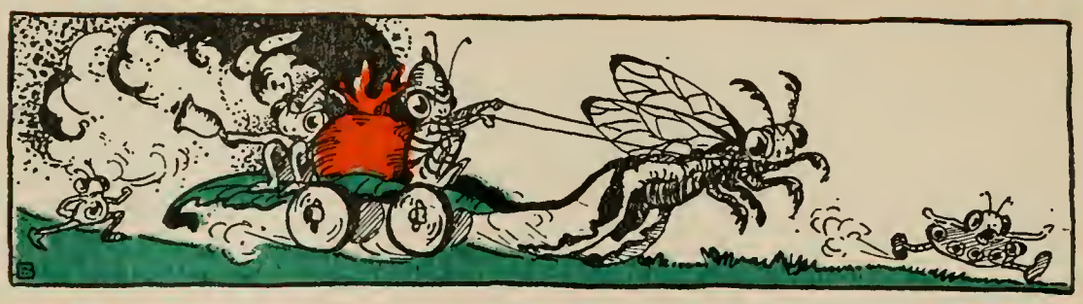
"The modern Ant apartment house,
Down by the garden wall,
Is wrapt in flames and burning up,
And soon the roof will fall."



Hot Times

Clang! Clang! Dang! Dang! Why what
is this?
The fire department's out,
And all the bugs are rushing round
With feverish noise and shout!
The modern Ant apartment house,
Down by the garden wall,
Is wrapt in flames, and burning up,
And soon the roof will fall.

The fire was started by the twins,
Who found a parlor match,
And thought it smart, out in the hall,
To give it one big scratch;
And now the fire has spread upstairs
And fills the house with smoke,
No wonder those who stagger out,
Sneeze violently and choke.



But here the hook and ladder comes,
My, what a valiant show—!
Just see them pitch out chairs and beds
And yell—"Look out below!"
A dandelion hose is laid
Straight from the dew-drop pump—
The water squirting out too soon
Hits poor Ben Beetle plump!

The firemen work with might and main,
And soon the flames subdue,
Meanwhile the inmates stand around
And feel cast-down and blue;
No longer do those children shout,
With faces wreathed in grins,
A feeling's born on me real strong,
I'd hate to be those twins.

A little moral to this tale,
I think we'd best attach,
And warn you all, both great and small,
To never light a match,
For, if those silly little twins
Had left it quite alone,
They would not now be bathed in tears,
Or sob so hard, and moan.

A Busy Buzzy Battle

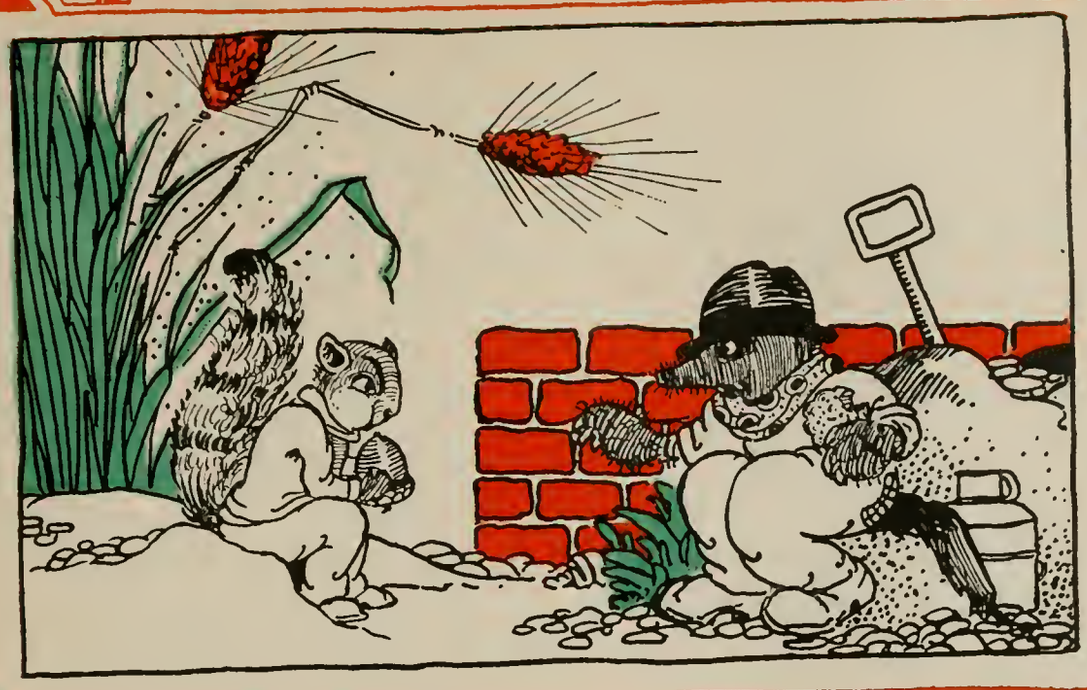
Tobias Turtle, wandering round,
Espied a huge bee-hive
All swarming over with the beasts—
The thing seemed fair alive—
And, crawling bravely on a rock,
He opened the attack
By smacking that old lodging-house
A most malicious whack.

Then swiftly drawing down his head
Inside his solid shell,
With great success the bees' assault
He managed to repel,
For, as they massed in battle line
To tackle him in front,
Their stingers sharp would strike his shell
And then become quite blunt.

The Queen-bee buzzed into his ear:
"Why cause me all this pain,
And wage fierce battle with my troops,
And pillage my domain?
You are a deep-dyed villain,
And a low-down profligate,
To come against us and make war
Incased in armour plate,

"If you insist upon a row
And quarrel with my clan,
Why don't you lay aside your shell
And fight us like a man?
For then the contest would be fair
If you would only strip,
But, as it stands, we might as well
Assail a battle-ship."

"Why, lady, this is shocking!"
Tobias then replied,
"For that would be immodest,
And my head I'd have to hide.
To take off this brown business suit
And fight in underwear,
The very thought brings on cold chills,
It gives me such a scare."



If Wishes Were Horses

Mike Mole, who digs the cellars,
Is complaining of his lot,
And thinks subway construction
Far too wearisome and hot;
One day he told Pete Chipmonk,
That if he could have his say,
The program of his waking hours
Would be fixed up this way:

"To always be industrious
And never soar up high,
Has stunted my ambition,
And at times I sit and sigh:
How nice 'twould be to ram around,
And bump my head, and slug,
And buzz, and kick up monkey-shines,
Just like a glad June Bug.

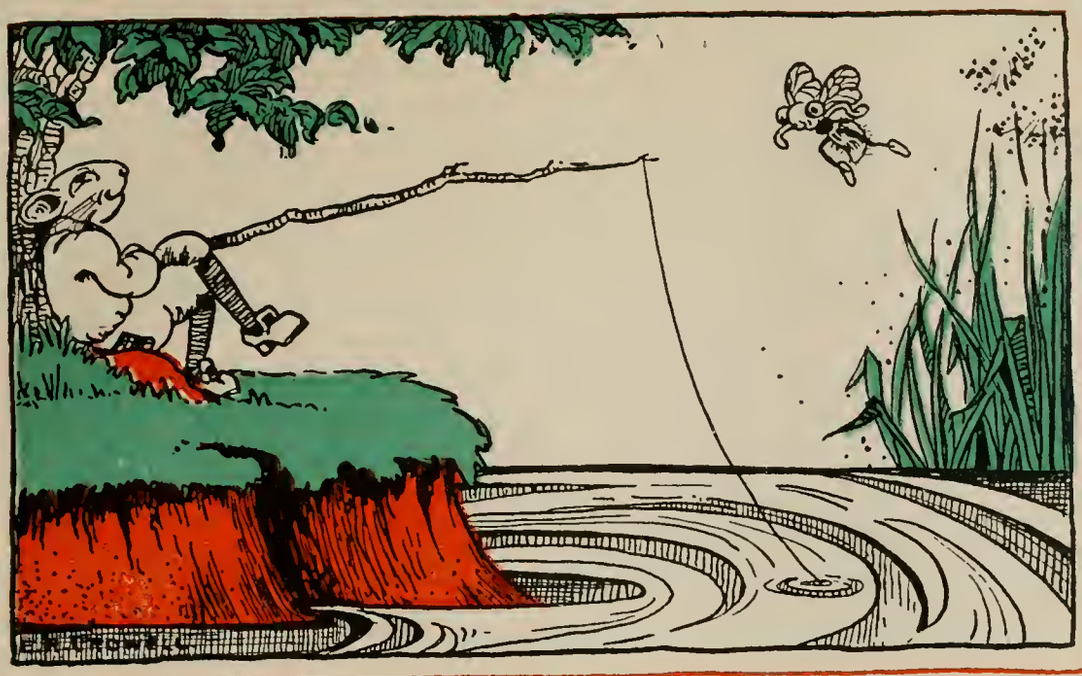
"So free from all anxiety
Is this sweet creature's life,
He is not on the firing line,
Or fussed with business strife,
But, in one constant round of joy,
And with abandoned glee,
He bangs himself against the wall,
Quite happy, gay and free.

"He's always up to some new game,
And never is at rest;
A heart like weathered oak must beat
Behind his manly chest;
Sometimes he'll hang about all night,
And round the lawn will roam,
And often has to sprint real hard
To beat the milkman home.

"I'd rather be a blade like this,
And never have a cent,
Than be obliged to pay the bills,
And save up for the rent.
Oh! that I need not sit around,
Like some fat, sleepy pug,
But could dress in my Sunday pants
And be a gay June Bug."

An Animated Pincushion

"And now a large pincushion
I resemble very close,
I've lost my health and lost my way
And feel sad and remorse."



An Animated Pincushion

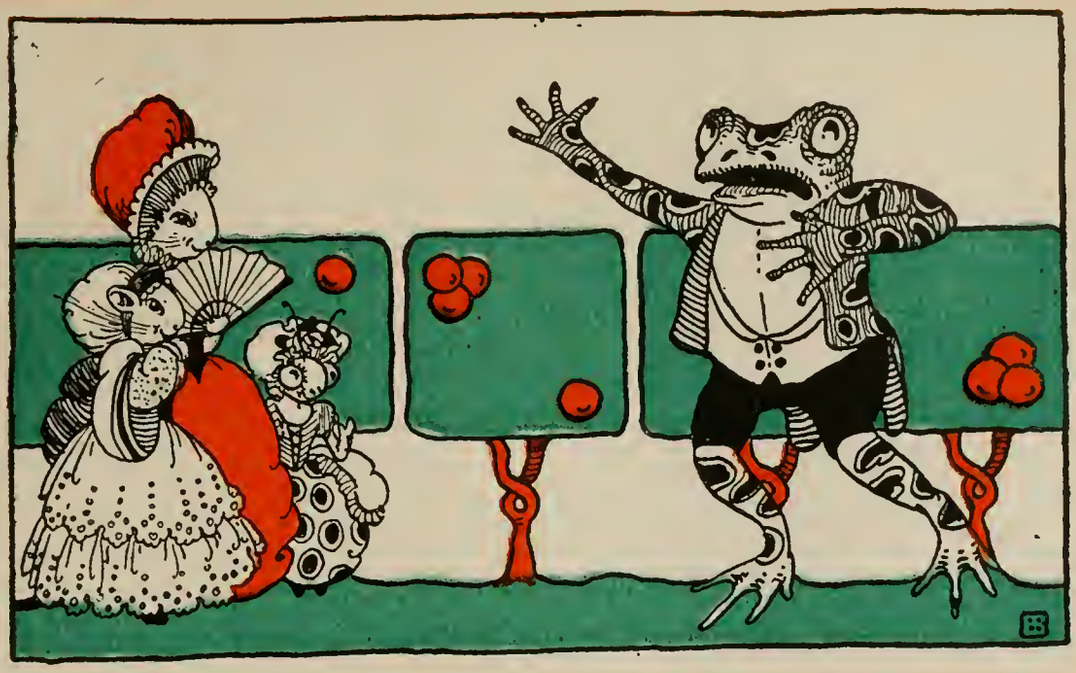
Poor Danny Dormouse came to grief
Down by the garden pool,
And at his plight we should not smile
Or laugh in ridicule;
Ben Beetle found him on the path—
It gave his heart a throb—
For, out of the soft gloaming, came
His large heart-rending sob!

"Boo-hoo!" the little sufferer squeaked,
"I'm in a sorry plight,
I've lost my way on this dark path,
And can't win home to-night;
This afternoon I started out
To fish the garden pond,
And try to catch some minnows small,
Of which I'm very fond.

"At first my luck was splendid,
And I caught them fast and thick—
Just count and you'll see seventeen
A-dangling from this stick—
And then a bow-legged Bumble-bee
Stung me upon the tail,
Because I called out names at him
His striped pants to assail.

"This spoiled my taste for fishing,
So, reeling in my line,
I, in an absent-minded fit,
Sat on a Porcupine!
My system then received a shock
It never will get o'er,
As, sick with pain and wild with fright,
I stormed around and tore.

"And now a large pincushion
I resemble very close,
I've lost my health and lost my way
And feel sad and remorse."
And so Ben left him standing
And raced for help to town,
As it was not good policy
For Danny to sit down.



Sharps and Flats

We dote on joyous harmony,
And have but lately hired
That baritone Bill Bull Frog—
Whose chords are so admired—
To warble to us late at night,
And lull us off to sleep,
By singing of the bell buoy's boom,
Or cradles in the deep.

One afternoon a song arose
And floated from within,
Tho' afterwards no one could tell
Just when it did begin:
The notes increased and sailed aloft
High o'er the garden wall,
So full of mellow harmony
It held each one in thrall.

Bill Bull Frog gasped to catch his breath,
And, beckoning to the throng,
He said—"I can die happy now,
I've heard a Locust's song:
I float about as in a dream,
And heave a gentle sigh,
And think of lolly-pops and jam,
Cold college ice, and pie.

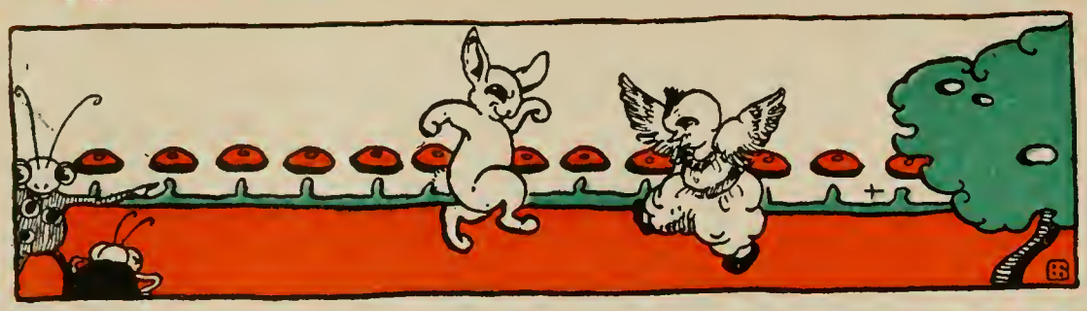
"I feel like doing foolish stunts,
It makes me light and gay,
Like riding in a motor car
Along the Milky Way;
If this song does not stop quite soon,
I will my new coat shed
And start in playing at leap-frog,
Or stand upon my head."

The ballad ceased, that o'er them all
Had cast a magic spell,
And faintly sank to nothing,
Like the echo from a bell;
I really can't express to you,
Or to your minds impart,
The beauty of this tender song,
That swelled Bill Bull Frog's heart.

Checkerberry Chick

Away down by the garden wall,
As busy as a bee,
Dwells, with her brood of seven kids,
The Widow Chickadee;
Now six of these sweet children
Are always clean and slick;
The other--well I'll tell you
Of this Checkerberry Chick.

To start with, he's the only son,
The other six are girls,
That's why they're always perked up fine
And wear their tails in curls;
But Chick goes round in rompers gray,
With patches on the seat,
And sometimes kicks his sandals off
To paddle in bare feet.



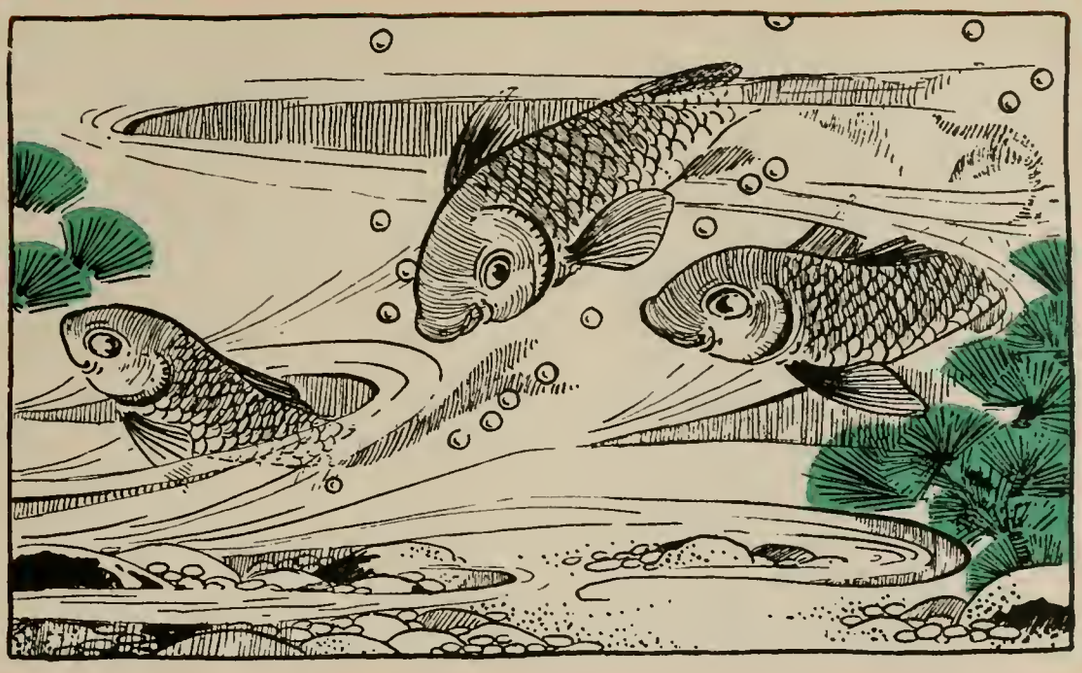
He tracks mud on the green moss rugs,
And bangs the outside door,
And when they have iced bug for lunch
He always asks for more;
Sometimes he turns fine somersaults,
And upside down he whirls,
Or else hangs round the playhouse small
To tease the little girls.

He's always in the best of health,
His spirits seldom droop,
And never has to go to bed
With chicken-pox or croup;
But, shortly after break of day,
If you will look real hard,
You'll see him gaily skipping round
Out there across the yard.

His mother dreams of little Chick,
And has thought out a plan
Of what great things he's going to do
When he becomes a man.
She thinks her offspring's intellect
Is really something weird,
And to the hearts of one and all
He has himself endeared.

Bill Bull Frog's Boom

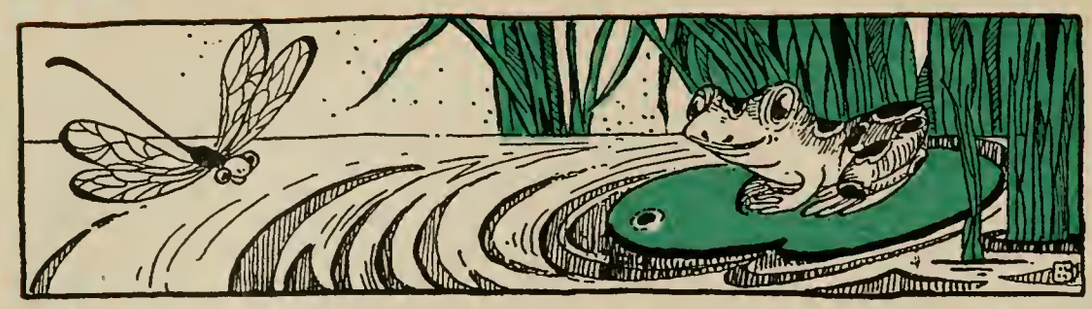
"When I was young and in my prime
I taught a Shiner school,
And sat, sedately dignified
Upon a high toad-stool."



Bill Bull Frog's Boom

Bill Bull Frog boomed out blatantly
Upon a light guitar,
And hoarsely croaked out in the fog
A song most singular;
Ben Beetle heard his sad lament,
As he lay tucked in bed,
And sniffed quite sympathetically,
For this is what he said:

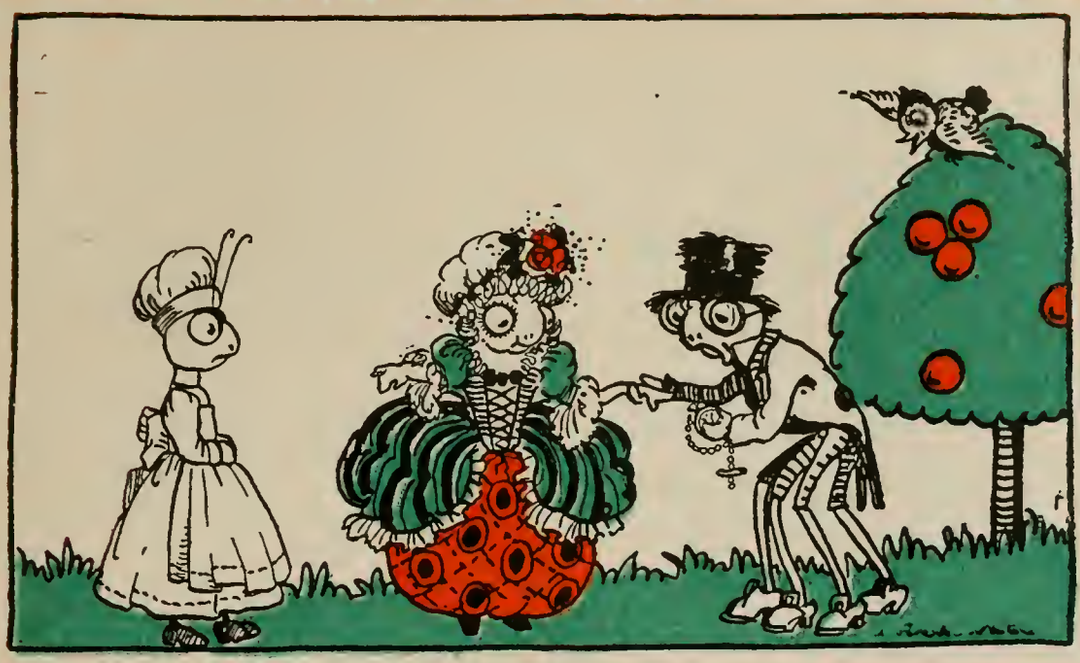
"When I was young and in my prime
I taught a Shiner school,
And sat sedately dignified,
Upon a high toad-stool;
Fin Pickerel was the brightest child,
And always could contrive
By wiggling hard and thinking long
To count straight up to five.



"But young Dick Dace distracted me,
He was a stupid dunce,
Nor, can I ever quite forgive
The way he fooled me once,
Because I had chastised the cub
For being two hours late,
He flopped down in a sulky rage
And wrote upon his slate:

"'You cannot drive a great big nail
With sponges, (so 'tis writ),
No matter how you bat away
Or stubbornly soak it;'
Now, I've been wondering ever since,
Each time I take a plunge,
If that young brat meant to convey
That *I* looked like a sponge!

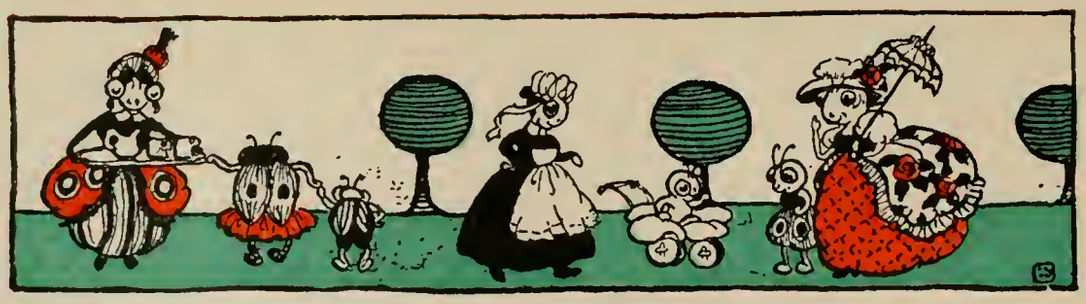
"A band of hungry ducks swam round
And ate my Shiner class,
And I was left without a job,
Alack! Also alas!
How often is it in this life
Things start so bright and fair,
And then the house of cards falls down
And leaves one in despair!"



A Desperate Case

Amongst the creatures large and small,
That in the Garden dwell,
Old Doctor Long Legs has repute
For making sick folks well;
He deals with coughs and sudden chills,
With sprains and colic too,
And uses poultices and pills,
And doses of fresh dew.

One evening there came to the lawn
A lady-bug named Jane,
And of her quilted petticoat
She seemed to be quite vain:
She said, "Dear Doctor I have heard
That you were in this section,
And came to ask you for advice
Concerning my complexion.



"For I have noticed lately,
There has been a sudden change,
And I am peeling off in spots,
And look so sad and strange;
So, from your store of wisdom deep,
Some remedy now pluck,
If you restore my beauty rare,
I'll think you are a duck."

The Doctor studied long and hard,
And rubbed his lofty brow,
Then, when the case was diagnosed,
He made a formal bow;
Said he: "My gentle creature,
If you will but wash your face,
I'm sure it would like magic work,
Your beauty to replace."

Pray treasure up these golden words,
Against a rainy day,
And let not their significance
From your mind ever stray,
Where e'er through life's dark wilderness
You stumble on, and grope,
Remember when you are in doubt,
The Water-pail and Soap!

To You

And so within the Garden Wall
The little world goes on,
Through building and through
nesting time,
With buzz and hum and song.

Nor need you search for magic
At the rainbow's shining end,
Nor pray that tinkling fairy charms
Their mystic help may lend.

Just watch the busy garden life
Behind the old gray wall,
And, if there's hoping in your eyes,
The veil will from them fall.

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